# INTERNÂTIONAL

### Saddam exile deal may include immunity: UK

AFP, London

Britain would be ready to see Iraqi President Saddam Hussein offered immunity from prosecution if he agreed to relinquish power in Iraq and go into exile, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said Monday.

"Well, it (immunity) might do," Straw told BBC television after a UN Security Council top-level meeting called to inject new momentum into the fight against international terror-

"I think that given that kind of choice... people would swallow hard and think 'Well, it is better to provide some degree of immunity if it meant that we could resolve this peacefully and the Iragi people could have put in a far better regime, which in due course could turn into a representative government," he said.

### Pak Islamists renew calls to dump pro-US policy

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan's main fundamentalist Islamic party has renewed calls for the expulsion of United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents and troops amid a swelling tide of anti-US sentiment.

Pakistan should "get rid of FBI agents, and air and military bases under the control of American forces should be taken back," the Jamaati-Islami (JI) party declared at an executive meeting late Monday.

### Another train derails in India

An engine and a bogie of Delhibound Pooja Express from Jaipur derailed early this morning near Delhi Cantonment railway station

The engine and the bogie jumped tracks at 2.55 am, just after the train left Delhi Cantonment station near here, a Northern Railway spokesman said

There were no casualties or injuries in the incident, he said adding the cause of the derailment was vet to be ascertained.

Additional manpower has been pressed into service and the track cleared for normal traffic after seven hours, the spokesman said adding the Pooja Express has since left for Jammu Tawi at 1005 hours.

#### Laden escaped by giving satellite phone to bodyguard

AFP, Washington

Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden escaped Afghanistan by giving his satellite phone to his Moroccan bodyguard, who served as decoy for US forces tracking the signal, The Washington Post reported Tuesday.

Abdallah Tabarak was captured at Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan in November 2001 and sent to the US base at Guantanamo Bay. Cuba, where he is now a leader among fellow al-Qaeda and Taliban detainees, senior Moroccan officials told the daily.

"He agreed to be captured or die," one official said. "That's the level of his fanaticism for bin Laden."

phone while moving around the cave complex at Tora Bora that was besieged by US and pro-US Afghan

### France, India set for to sign submarine, missile deal

AFP, New Delhi

France and India are to sign an agreement worth two billion dollars to build six Scorpene submarines in India and deliver 36 missiles from a European consortium. Indian and

French sources said Tuesday. "The deal is complete and it is awaiting approval of the CCS (Cabinet Committee on Security)," an Indian defence source told AFP.

The French side hopes the final green light from the Indian govern-

ment will come in mid-February. The pact, which involves the transfer of French technology, will have strategic implications and dramatically increase French influence in India's military market. Until now Indian submarines have been made with help from Russia and



France's Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin (R) opens a Security Council meeting on Monday at the UN in New York. At center is the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and left is China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan warned a top-level meeting of the Security Council on Monday that human rights, democracy and the rule of law were at risk in the fight against terrorism.

# Iraq is sure of US attack

### Bush fails to win UNSC backing for early action

The Iraqi government will expand its cooperation with UN weapons inspectors under a new agreement worked out in two days of talks, but it's sure the US military will attack anyway, an Iraqi vice president said

"It is possible any minute, any second that while the inspectors are still here, the aggression will take place," Taha Yassim Ramadan said.

The United States, which does not believe Irag's claim it has no more biological, chemical or nuclear weapons, has threatened war against Iraq if it fails to disarm volun-

In the negotiations Sunday and Monday, Iraq gave ground to international arms controllers on procedural snares in the two-month-old UN monitoring regime. But it will be left to teams of UN and Iraqi experts. in the months to come, to work out

more complex issues of accounting for old stocks of doomsday weap-

The talks led by chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the UN nuclear agency, were a prelude to a crucial report they must make to the UN Security Council on Monday, on progress made in the UN effort to ensure Iraq no longer has banned weapons programs.

If the council judges Iraq's cooperation to be poor, that could set the stage for finding the Baghdad government in "material breach" of UN edicts, and for a move toward military action against it.

In another development Tuesday, the Syrian news agency reported that foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran. Jordan and Turkev will meet in Istanbul this week to discuss ways of averting a US-led war against

To try to forestall threats of war, Iraqi officials in the Baghdad talks made concessions in a handful of procedural disputes, most notably an agreement to encourage Iraqi weapons scientists, engineers and

other specialists to submit to private

interviews with UN inspectors. But Secretary of State Colin Powell played down their significance, calling the concessions "just more of the same. ... Only under pressure does Iraq respond." The United States has threatened war even without UN support.

The UN teams have found that every potential witness approached thus far declined to be interviewed without an Iragi official present, an arrangement inspectors believe keeps the specialists from being candid.

PTI adds: The US has failed to win support for an early military action against Irag in the UN Security Council with even its NATO allies - France, having the veto power, and Germany opposed to an American offensive to disarm Saddam Hussein

Washington was taken aback by the blunt tone of French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin who told the Council that Paris will not support any resolution for military action and accused the Bush administration of "impatience."

Though France, the current president of the Council, did not rule out the possibility of use of veto, diplomats expect it to abstain during a vote on the issue

During meetings between the two, de Villepin told US Secretary of State Colin Powell that America did not have majority in the Council for a resolution giving explicit authority to use force to be adopted.

Nine positive votes without any member vetoing the proposition is needed for any resolution to be adopted by the 15-member Council

### **US, Asian nations talk ways** to choke terrorist funding

Officials from more than 20 countries including the United States began a closed-door regional meeting here Tuesday to coordinate efforts aimed at choking off funding

The workshop draws representatives from foreign ministries, law enforcement agencies and financial regulatory bodies of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

The US and Singapore governments are co-hosting the two-day

"The purpose of the workshop is to promote international cooperation in combating terrorist financing providing an opportunity for ASEAN and PIF officials to exchange views on our national experiences and strengthen our individual and collective capacities in counter-terrorism finance. Singapore's foreign ministry said in

Participants will discuss compli-

ance with a UN Security Council resolution providing a common legal basis for international action against terrorists and their supporters, and other initiatives to curb terrorist financing

Global cooperation against terrorism grew strong after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, said Raymond Lim, Singapore's minister of state for foreign affairs.

Before the attacks, only four nations were parties to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. Now a total of 132 nations are signatories. Lim said.

"There is increasing recognition among law enforcement, financial regulatory and intelligence agencies that combating money laundering and terrorism financing are important ingredients in the fight against terrorism," the minister said n a speech opening the workshop.

'The globalised nature of the international financial system, which has served as an engine for unprecedented economic growth in

many countries, has made the transfer of funds across borders a seamless task." Lim said.

The efficiency of the financial system has been abused by terrorists and the challenge for governments is how to prevent this while ensuring that the system works smoothly and legitimate transactions are not unnecessarily disrupted, he added.

Lim pointed out differences between terrorist financing and money laundering by criminal syndicates -- the sums moved by terrorists can be smaller and more difficult to detect, and often involves 'clean money" from ostensibly legitimate businesses or charities.

"Beheading the Hydra of terrorist financing therefore poses new and difficult challenges for many enforcement and regulatory agencies," he said

Singapore, Southeast Asia's financial capital, has ratified the convention on suppressing terrorism finance.

### Avalanche kills 8 skiers in Canada

REUTERS, AFP, Revelstoke

At least eight skiers, most believed to be Americans, were killed, and at least one injured Monday after an avalanche roared down a glacier in western Canada's Rocky Mountains, officials said.

A wall of snow buried a 20person wilderness skiing party of tourists and professional guides at about 10:30 a.m. PST (1 p.m. EST) on Durrand Glacier near the town of Revelstoke in southeastern British Columbia, said Selkirk Mountain Experience, the company operating

"There were seven people confirmed who have died in the avalanche," according to the company, which declined to release names or hometowns of the victims until their families could be notified.

One person was in stable condition in a hospital and about 12 others were ferried back to

### Ambush kills 1 American in Kuwait

REUTERS, Kuwait

Gunmen wielding automatic weapons shot dead an American working for the U.S. military and wounded another in an ambush on their car on Tuesday near a U.S. base in Kuwait where Washington is preparing for a

The United States embassy condemned the incident as a terror ist attack. It said the injured man was in critical condition in hospital with multiple gunshot wounds.

The two men were attacked while driving on a highway north of Kuwait City near Camp Doha, the main U.S. military base in Kuwait. The U.S. embassy said they were contractors with a firm working for the Defense Department.

### Canberra escapes bushfire danger

REUTERS, Canberra

Thousands of people in Canberra watched and waited for bush fires Tuesday but favorable winds spared the Australian capital a return of blazes that devastated suburbs on

Weary residents in the smokefilled city remained on rooftops with garden hoses as the sun set over the capital, eyeing the horizon for any sign of flames, but emergency officials said the crisis had probably

While spot fires reignited within burned-out areas, the city suffered none of the firestorm conditions of extreme heat and powerful winds that destroyed 419 homes and killed four people Saturday.

### Arafat invites new leaders to polls

AFP, Jerusalem

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, speaking on the day the Authority was originally supposed to have held an election, told the CNN television channel on Monday that he would like to hold a vote as soon as possible, but it would require the withdrawal of Israeli troops.

Interviewed amid the ruins of his headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah, Arafat also said he was eager for new leaders to arise in his Fatah movement, and was encouraging new talent.



Regional officials meet on Tuesday in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo for a special session of the South Asia Co-operative Environment program From left: Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Tyronne Fernando, Environment Minister Rukman Senanayake, Pakistan's Minister of State for Environment Tahir Iqbal, United Nations Environment Program's regional director Surendra Shrestha, Secretary General of the seven-member South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Q. A. M. Rahim and Director General of the regional environmental grouping, Mahboob Elahi.

## Pressure won't solve nuke crisis: N Korea

### US builds global support to isolate Pyongyang

Communist North Korea said Tuesday US-led international pressure will fail to resolve the nuclear crisis and Pyongyang will never accept the United States terms for dialogue.

Washington has recently softened its hardline stance towards Pyongyang, offering talks and economic aid if the North Korean regime scraps its nuclear drive. But Rodong Sinmun, the mouth-

piece of North Korea's ruling

Workers Party, said the proposals

were meaningless as long as preconditions were attached. "The DPRK (North Korea) can never accept such US demands." the newspaper said in a commentary carried by the official Korean

Central News Agency (KCNA). "The key to the solution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula does not lie in the DPRK's (North Korea's) abandonment of its nuclear program' before dialogue,

"The United States should drop its

hypocritical and improper attitude toward 'dialogue' and give the DPRK legal security assurances by signing a non-aggression treaty with it." As Washington stepped up its

drive to heap international pressure on the regime, Pyongyang also hit out at US efforts to isolate it over the crisis that has prompted North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and threats to restart a mothballed nuclear

"If the US persists in its moves to isolate and stifle the DPRK, the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula can never be settled," the newspaper said in a separate commentary carried by KCNA.

Meanwhile, the United States strengthened the international alliance against North Korea's nuclear program on Tuesday, as its top disarmament official visited South Korea for talks with military

US Under Secretary of State for International Security and Arms Control John Bolton arrived in Seoul as Russia declared it fully backed the United States' drive to eliminate North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

"We have the same goal: to

enforce the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (that North Korea abandoned)," Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov said on television in Moscow. Mamedov was speaking after hearing the preliminary results of an

apparently successful mission by Russian envoy Alexander Losyukov to North Korea. Losyukov held a surprise meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-II

that lasted for six hours on Monday during which he presented Russia's plan to defuse the nuclear crisis.

Under Russia's peace strategy the United States would be required to quarantee not to launch a military attack against North Korea, while offering economic and humanitarian aid to the impoverished nation.



Pakistani High Commissioner to Bangladesh Iqbal Ahmed Khan presented some books on Pakistan to the Foreign Service Academy of Bangladesh on Sunday. Picture shows Jamil Majid (L), Principal of the academy, is receiving the books from Igbal Ahmed Khan

### 9 killed in night of Kashmir violence

AFP, Srinagar

A string of attacks and gunfights in the last 24 hours killed nine people, including a civilian bystander and two Hindu villagers, in Indianadministered Kashmir, police said Tuesday Suspected Islamic militants fired

a grenade overnight at a police post in southern Rajouri district but it missed its target and hit the home of civilian Mohammad Sharief, police

Sharief was killed and four family members who lived with him in Kandi village were injured, two seriously, a police spokesman said. In southern Doda district, mili-

tants overnight killed two Hindus Jagdish Singh and Rumal Singh, who were part of a security militia guarding Sumba Jouri village The two were part of a Village

Defence Committee, a Hindu militia in the restive province armed to ward off attacks by Islamic rebels against the minority group.



After Pakistan raked the Kashmir

issue at a UN Security Council meeting on terrorism, India hit out at Islamabad for trying to sidetrack the problem of terrorism by raising this extraneous" issue.

"The problem in the state (Jammu and Kashmir) is crossborder terrorism encouraged and incited by Pakistan despite repeated statements by the Council that terrorism is unjustified for whatever purpose -- political, economic and social," India's amassador to the UN Vijay K Nambiar said here Monday shortly after Pakistan Foreign Minister

Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri's speech at the meet He said to equate with terrorism the action by the police to establish law and order in the face of violence by terrorists is a "travesty" of truth

infiltration of terrorists from across and "perversion" of values the border but the situation in Kashmir, Nambiar said, is an Jammu and Kashmir was improving

the state have repeatedly expressed their determination to this effect. Only last year, there were elections to the state assembly where the turnout was much more than the sham parliamentary elections in Pakistan.

People of Jammu and Kashmir, he added, went to polling booths in large numbers despite intimidation by terrorist groups sponsored and supported by Pakistan. Kasuri while raising the Kashmir

issue at the meeting had accused

India of "misusing" the campaign against terror to "denigrate and suppress the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to self determi-Meanwhile, Indian Army Chief Gen N C Vij on Tuesday said there has been "o change of heart" on the part of Pakistan with regard to

"They (Pakistan) are attempting

PHOTO: AFF

their best (at infiltration) but we are keeping it in check. There has been no change of heart on their part but we are better prepared to check it," Gen Vij told reporters during a visit to the ongoing National Cadet Corps (NCC) Republic Day camp at the Delhi Cantonment here. The Army Chief, however, said

"things were looking up" in the state and the "LOC (Line of Control) is

expectations." he said. To a question on who would be the second-in-command in the Nuclear Command Structure, he said, "it is still being worked out."

"We have had very good elections. It has given lot of hope and